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THE IDEOLOGY OF PROJECT *SUCCESS*: THE ROLE OF COLD WAR ANTICOMMUNISM IN THE 1954 CIA COUP IN GUATEMALA

Benjamin (Ben) Greenho

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Over the course of nine days in June 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the primary intelligence agency of the United States, carried out a covert operation designed to overthrow Jacobo Arbenz, the President of Guatemala. During this operation, known as Project *SUCCESS*, the CIA overcame multiple unexpected setbacks to successfully remove Arbenz from power, putting an end to his efforts to implement a state-led program of land redistribution in Guatemala. This thesis seeks to analyze the events that occurred before, during, and in the aftermath of Project *SUCCESS* through the lens of Cold War anticommunist ideology, or the belief held by many American policymakers after World War II that the Soviet Union posed both a geopolitical and ideological threat to the United States because it was actively attempting to subvert other countries by supporting the spread of Communism around the world. Specifically, this thesis argues that the Cold War anticommunist ideology of the various mid-level CIA actors involved in Project *SUCCESS* was the driving force behind the operation. As a result of this anticommunist ideological framework, and supported by the national security policies of U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, these CIA actors developed and executed Project *SUCCESS* in order to eliminate what they perceived to be the Communist-inspired threat of Arbenz's land reform. In its three chapters, this thesis analyzes how these mid-level CIA actors' anticommunist ideology had a pervasive influence on U.S. actions in Guatemala during the 1950s, beginning with the CIA's first unsuccessful attempt to remove Arbenz from power in 1952, continuing through the planning and implementation of Project *SUCCESS*, and later impacting the State Department's attempts to shape Guatemala's political and economic future after 1954.